

set forth the providing of an official postal product having a first image area and a second image area wherein a protective coating is provided that covers the second image area such that an official cancellation mark placed over said area will not be permanently adhered to the personal image.

The Examiner has stated that the Masato et al. reference discloses and official postal product comprising a printing substrate (1) and a first image area having an official postal indicia (11, 12) and a second image area having a personal image (13) and a protective coating on the personal image in the second image area such that an official cancellation mark placed over the second are will not permanently adhere to the personal image. In this regard, the Examiner refers to the Advantage section of the English translation of an abstract. In this regard, applicants submit herewith a machine language translation of the entire Masato et al. reference. It can be seen from this translation that the invention does not disclose or suggest a protective coating covering the personal image as taught and claimed by applicant.

First, with regard to the embodiment of Fig. 1, there is provided an image receiving sheet 1 having a dye exhaustion material layer 4. As best illustrated by Figs. 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d. The dye layer 6 of Fig. 2 illustrates a printed image. See page 5, paragraphs 14 and 15. As also can be seen by this paragraph there is a layer 7 for postmark 14. As illustrated in Fig. 1d the postmark covers the image area. This is in contrast to the present invention wherein a protective layer is provided over the image area such that the postmark will not adhere thereto. The embodiment of Figs. 1 and 2 of the Masato et al. reference is totally apart and distinct from that of the present invention and in fact teaches away.

From the present invention, Fig. 3 illustrates an alternate embodiment. However, in this embodiment, the image area is just simply printed in a different place from which the official postage and postmark is provided. As set forth in paragraph 16 on page 7, the basic region 22 is provided to provide the place where the amount and postal service mark can be provided. A specific designated area 21 is provided solely where the personal image is provided. Thus, there is provided two separate and distinct locations where the image and official postage may be provided. There is no teaching or suggestion for providing a

protective coating over the personal image as taught and claimed by applicant. This protective layer prevents the postmark from being provided on the image. As set forth on page 8, paragraph 18 of Masato et al., the last two lines, the postmark is not provided on the design region 21. Thus, the postmark is not provided in that region. In the present invention, this is totally avoided by providing the protective layer over the image area. In the present invention, it does not matter where the postmark is placed as the image will not be effected.

Thus, in summary, it is respectfully submitted that the Masato et al. reference does not teach or suggest the invention as taught and claimed by applicant. Further none of the other references cited teach anything that would render independent claims obvious. Accordingly, the rejections set forth in paragraphs 3, 4, and 5 do not render the independent claims obvious.

In view of the foregoing applicant respectfully submits that the application is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Frank Pincelli', is written over a horizontal line.

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